

DIOCESAN NEWS

Ecumenical group plans to found home for dying

An ecumenical group is working with St. Patrick's Church, Victor, to found a home for the terminally ill in Victor. The "hospice-type" house would be at 221 High St., in a building owned by the parish.

On Sept. 7, "Hang Around Victor Days," the home's steering committee will hand out brochures about the project. Volunteers staffing a booth also will take names of potential volunteers for fixing up the house and providing care. They also will seek help naming the house.

A house is usually the hardest thing for any hospice-house program to acquire, noted Dorothy Partington of St. Patrick's, who has been in on the planning. Both she and Valerie Richter of Victor United Methodist Church, who heads up the steering committee that was created this summer, are registered nurses who volunteer at Advent House, a home for the terminally ill in Fairport.

"Fortunately the house was given to us to use. It's a great start," Partington said.

However, William Kocher, attorney for St. Patrick's, cautioned, "There are details that do have to be worked out."

The house and 1.8 acres, which St. Patrick's purchased from the late Howard and Hazel Hunt, adjoin the parish cemetery.

Kocher said issues include who would hold title to the house and exactly how the use of it would be arranged.

Obituaries

Sr. Carmel Marie, SSJ; 89; taught 44 years in diocese

Sister Carmel Marie Tremonte, SSJ, who taught in diocesan schools for 44 years, died Aug. 2, 1996, at the St. Joseph Convent Infirmary at age 89.

An Auburn native, Sister Carmel Marie entered the Sisters of St. Joseph from St. Francis of Assisi Parish in 1927.

Among the schools where she taught are: Corpus Christi, Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Ambrose, in Rochester; St. Patrick's, Corning; St. Patrick's, Seneca Falls; St. Mary's, Canandaigua; St. Mary's, Waterloo; Immaculate Conception, Ithaca; and St. Stephen's, Geneva.

The funeral liturgy for Sister Carmel Marie was celebrated Aug. 5.

Sister Carmel Marie is survived by four sisters, Teresa Longo, her twin, Josephine Dello-Stritto and Margaret Myers, all of Auburn, and Adelaide Ginstro of Syracuse; two brothers, Joseph and Frank of Auburn; numerous nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews; and her sisters in the Congregation of St. Joseph.

Helen Reagan of Geneva; 99; charter CDA member

Helen K. Reagan, formerly of Seneca Falls, died at the age of 99 in Geneva General Hospital Nursing Home July 9, 1996.

A member of St. Patrick's Church in Seneca Falls and of its Guild and Altar Society, Miss Reagan also was a charter member of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Court 824 of Seneca Falls and a member of the Auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus Council 222.

She was predeceased by a sister, Marie Deming, and a brother, James. Survivors include a niece, Mrs. Virginia (Moody) Thompson of Silver Springs, Md.; three grandnephews; two grandnieces; and seven great-grandnieces and great-grandnephews.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's July 12. Burial was in St. Columbkille Cemetery, Seneca Falls. Contributions may be made to St. Patrick's School, Seneca Falls, NY 13148.

Churches share Hispanic minister

By Kathleen Schwar
Staff writer

If anyone can appreciate the fresh peaches and pears on their tables this time of year, Xochitl Palacios of Marion can. Being the daughter of agricultural workers — and having worked for several years with migrants in the Finger Lakes region — she recognizes what was involved in getting that fruit from the trees onto the table.

"You see your parents doing it, you know how hard it is," she said. "I can relate to that."

Palacios continues to relate to those efforts as the Diocese of Rochester's first regional Hispanic pastoral associate for Yates and Ontario counties. This new job gives her the opportunity to do something she was never able to do in her previous work with migrants: She can help arrange for the sacraments.

"I have two people who want to baptize children and two who want to get married," she said happily last week. "I'll be arranging that with them and talking to the priest."

"To me, it's something that's very important in their lives, and wasn't an easy thing for them to do."

Xochitl ("So-chee") Palacios has been working in the new position since July. It is funded by St. Francis DeSales and St. Stephen's Parishes in Geneva; St. Michael's, Penn Yan/St. Andrew's, Dundee; St. Theresa's, Stanley/St. Mary's, Rushville; St. Januarius, Naples/St. Patrick, Prattsburg; the diocesan Spanish Apostolate and Catholic Charities.

Palacios' role is to support and develop parish-sponsored ministries in Geneva's established Hispanic community, and in transient farmworker communities in the two counties. She is currently forming a group for Hispanic youths, and also hopes to organize retreats for adults.

"For us, we needed to learn more about the farmworker population," stated Father Mark Miller, pastor of St. Theresa/St. Mary's.

In Stanley, which doesn't have a town center like Rushville's, migrant workers are less visible, he said.

"First it's a matter of becoming aware of them here, second, of getting to know them, and third, getting to know what their needs are and how we can help them," the pastor said.

Father Miller added that Palacios already has inspired parishioners to get to know migrant workers through a slide



Xochitl Palacios

presentation.

Her professional experience has helped to prepare her for her ministry. For five years she worked for the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry (as a nutrition advocate who also helped people get food stamps), the Rushville Health Center (as translator, case manager, outreach worker, HIV counselor, phlebotomist and conductor of health screenings at camps and daycare centers) and the Agricultural Childhood Center (as teacher's aide, translator and then assistant to the director) in Williamson.

Palacios was born in Tijuana and was raised in Guadalajara. Her parents worked in Chicago for several years, and Palacios traveled back and forth with her grandmother to visit them. Her mother worked in an electronics plant, and also in canning and packing factories. Her father, a migrant worker, harvested fruit and also did construction work. While living with her grandmother, Palacios attended Catholic school.

"My grandmother always wanted me to be doing something with the church," she said. "That's what my happiness is, because I am doing it and liking it."

At the age of 12 Palacios joined her parents to live in San Jose, Calif. She remembers picking fruit with her father, but more to be with him than to help the family finances.

As a child, she didn't experience some

of the hardships she sees here, she said.

Last week, for example, a farmworker family she was visiting told her of a newly arrived family of Guatemalans from Tennessee, where they hadn't found work. The family was sleeping in a van.

Even before meeting them, Palacios located clothing, food, and arranged through an agency two days' hotel boarding to help them get by. She also planned to enroll the children at Geneva's Agricultural Child Center.

Palacios was particularly concerned for the family because it included children who were 19 months and 6 months old. Some growers don't like to hire families because they say children take up space in the camps, and the women don't work as much as the men do, she said.

Palacios' work also involves translating and advocating for such "luxuries" as hot water.

She also is sensitive to whether or not workers have received sacraments such as first Communion, a question she raised with one group of young men recently.

"They said no, it's in public, we're not going to dress in white," she said. They expected to have to dress as children do for the sacrament in Mexico, she explained, and they were embarrassed about the attention they'd receive because of their ages.

Realizing their interest, however, she talked with a priest who set up classes preparing them for their first Communion.

Next year, Wayne County Catholic churches hope to sponsor a similar full-time Hispanic pastoral ministry, according to Father Robert Kreckel of St. Mary's of the Lake, Ontario. They just recently hired, with Catholic Charities money, a temporary part-time minister, Carlina Ortega of Geneva.

"The number of Spanish-speaking migrants has grown considerably over the last four or five years," he said.

As it has grown, the nature of that population has also changed, Palacios noted. In the past, she explained, most of the farm workers in the Geneva area were from Mexico. But now many are also from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Puerto Rico.

The first place these migrants often turn to in a new community is the church, Palacios said. Fortunately, the Diocese of Rochester has several Spanish-speaking priests and regular Masses in Spanish, she said, and their language skills are quite good.

"I've been blessed with a Hispanic community that is very supportive," she added. "... And I'm glad. Because it's not so easy (for others) to trust somebody."



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